
SHRI VALLABHACHARYA

AND

HIS TEACHINGS

પુસ્તકાલય સુવર્ણમય
શ્રી કમલેશ્વરી સેવા સંસ્થા
એમ. વી. રોડ, ડી. સી.
કાંઠેલી (વેસ્ટ), મુંબઈ-૪૦૦ ૦૬૭

Originally Written in Gujarati

by

Dr. Chimanlal M. Vaidya.

and

Translated in English

by

Shri Bhailalbai N. Shastri.

FOREWARD

(By Dr. Manjula R. Majmudar, M. A. LL. B; Ph. D.)

The abstract philosophical speculations of Sankaracharya (A. D. 788-820) could not make much appeal to the masses, who found sufficient spiritual food in the Bhakti (devotion) schools of Ramanuja, Nimbarka, Madhva and Vallabha.

Vallabhacharya (A. D. 1473-1531), a Tailanga Brahmana of South India was born in a family with leanings towards Vedic rituals and the worship of Gopala krishna. He made more than one extensive tour in India, and came in contact with leaders of other religious schools. He won the title of an Acharya (teacher) in the court of Vijayanagara; and found a good following in all communities. He spent most of his life in places like Banaras and Adel (about two miles from Allahabad), where he carried on his literary and religious activities.

Vallabhacharya has tried to show that the basic sacred texts, such as the Upanisads, the Gita, and the Brahmasutras teach beyond doubt the doctrine of Advaita (non-dualism), pure and simple, without any reference to what is called Maya by S'ankara. The Advaita of the Upanisads is thus S'uddha (Pure) unalloyed with Maya, both the cause and effect being

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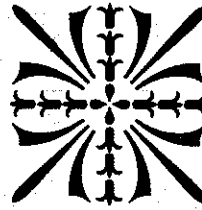
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one. Accordingly, Vallabha's system is called **Suddhadvaita** (pure non-dualism). As the system, again, strongly emphasizes **Pusti** (divine grace) as the most powerful and unfailing means of enjoying the highest bliss, it is also known from the religious point of view as **Pustimarga** (the Path of Divine Grace).

Vallabhacharya added the **Bhagavata** as a basic work of authority to the **Prasthan-trayi** of the **Vedas**, the **Gita** and the **Brahmsutras**. He has shown that the **Bhagavata** explains and develops all the points of the **Brahmasutras** and is a running commentary on the **Gita**. The **Bhagavata**, which is a record of all the experiences of **Vyasa** in meditation, is therefore, otherwise known as **Samadhi bhasa** (the language of meditation).

Vallabhacharya has, written, besides many things, sixteen small treatises called **Sodasa-granthas** which are helpful in understanding his system of **Bhakti**. His school has helped to produce a rich literature on **Bala Krishna Bhakti**, not only in Sanskrit, but also in Hindi, **Vraja** and **Gujarati** languages.

The divine bliss of **Bhakti** is considered by Vallabha to be purely a gift of the Lord, and cannot be obtained by any human effort. It is this idea of the gift of divine grace that is called **Pusti**.

One thing that distinguished Vallabha from other Acharyas was the fact that Vallabha preached **bhakti** to be practised at home while doing one's normal jobs, and not going in for renouncement of the world. He himself was a **grihastha acharya** who, while remaining in this world, was not of it, like the lotus in water. This view about the relation between the world and the Lord, drew many devotees to his fold, which comprised men and women drawn from different castes and walks of life.

Such was Vallabha, a source of inspiration and solace to the groaning world full of hypocrisy and atheism, in the 15th century.

This brochure originally written in Gujarati by Dr. Chimanlal M. Vaidya and rendered into chaste English by Shri B. N. Shastri deserves wide publicity.

It will acquaint many kindred souls with the gospel of **Bhakti** sought for in the present world, which is anything but godly and god-fearing.

Vasanta Panchami
Samvat. 2015

Chaitanydham
Pratapganj
Baroda 2.



PREFACE

It is known to all that Shuddhadwaita Samsad has been publishing authentic literature on Pushtimarga since its inception. The main purpose is to popularize the noble and lofty teachings of Shri Vallabhacharyaji among the followers of Pushtimarga and the modern educated youths and intelligentsia of our land.

In keeping with this objective, the Samsad first undertook the work of translating the famous books in English on Sampradaya Viz. (1) Doctrines of Vallabhacharya, (2) Vallabha and (3) Life and Teachings of Shri Vallabhacharyaji. Late Shri Mohanlal V. Gandhi B. A., LL. B. who was one of the organizers of Shuddhadwait Samsad translated all the above books in Gujarati. Shuddhadwaita Samsad could not at that time, publish independent books in English for various reasons, though Shri M. V. Gandhi had prepared in manuscript from the Life of Shri Vallabha, The Sayings of Shri Gokulnathji and select passages from Subodhiniji in English.

Anugraha (a monthly periodical) has started an English section from March, 1959. Now Samsad has decided to publish independent books in English on the different aspects of Pushtimarga and the present work is the first in the series. The second book in the series called "Doctrines of Vallabhacharya" is written by a German Scholar Prof. Glassenapp of Konigsberg,

Germany and will be shortly out of the press.

The foreward of the present book is written by a well-known Gujarati scholar, Shri Manjulal R. Mazmudar, while the second book in the series is prefaced by Prof. Govindlal H. Bhatt. Both are eminent scholars in their respective field and they need no introduction. Here we take the opportunity of conveying our heart felt thanks to them for favouring us with their introductory notes.

The present book 'Shri Vallabhacharyaji and His Teachings' is originally written in Gujarati by Dr. Chimanlal M. Vaidya, the editor of Anugraha and the Secretary of the Shuddhadwaita Samsad. The book is highly spoken of by the literary persons of Gujarata. The English version of the Gujarati book has been carefully prepared by Shri Bhailalbhai N. Shastri, M. A., B. ED. who is a well-known sampradayika scholar. Shri Shastriji weilds a facile pen in English and we earnestly hope that this brochure will be appreciated by the readers.

We heartily thank Shri Ramanlal Girdharlal Desai for defraying the cost of the publication of this booklet in memory of his revered father Shri Girdharlal Dosabhai Desai. Late Shri Girdharlal Desai was born in Samvat 1931 at Visnagar and belonged to Visanagar Bania Community. He was B. A., LL. B. and began practising at Baroda in Samvat 1957. Soon he became a leading member of the Bar by dint of his penetrating genius and legal acumen. He was appointed as State Pleader by the

PREFACE

late Maharaja Shri Sayaji Rao Gaekwar of Baroda and worked from Sam. 1972 to 2001 in that capacity. By virtue of his post he was also a member of the State Legislative Council. In appreciation of his valuable services to the People and the State he was conferred the title of 'Raja-Ratna' by the Maharaja Sayaji Rao who often sought legal advice from him on important state matters.

He is survived by two sons and a daughter, of them Shri Ramanbhai is B. A., LL. B and has a flourishing practice. He has a good knowledge of Sampradayika literature. His second son Shri Shantibhai is a science graduate (B. Sc.). The whole family is highly cultured, noble and famous for their munificence. They have donated more than five lacs of rupees from "Raja-Ratna Shri Girdharbhai Trust Fund towards the establishment of a big hospital at Visnagar. From the same Trust a homeopathic dispensary has been run at Baroda.

Again we offer our sincere thanks to Shri Ramanbhai for bearing the entire cost of publication of this book.

Dr. Chimanlal M. Vaidya

Honorary Secretary,

Shri Suddhadwaita Samsad, Kapadwanj.



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❖ Short Quotation ❖

"Whether we say.....Hearing-Remembering-Meditating
in Upanisadic language or Hearing-Remembering-
Singing in the language of Sri Bhagavata.....means;
knowledge i.e. to receive knowledge of the desired
scriptures by sitting near the Guru.....
to put into practice the things heard through the
auspicious mouth of Guru....."

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SHRI VALLABHACHARYA

AND

HIS TEACHINGS.

CHAPTER I

Family and Parents.

Shri Vallabhacharya, a great Hindu Acharya of Vaishnava cult, was born in the fifteenth century. He was born at a time when Hindu religion and culture were in danger of being destroyed by the fanatic Mahomedans. The birth of Shri Vallabhacharyaji heralded a new era in the history of Hindu religion. He saved Hindu religion from the savage attacks of Muslim rulers. He breathed new life into the people of India who had lost all hope of redemption under the rule of sword and terror.

South India is the birth place of almost all the Acharyas of Hindu thought like Shankara, Ramanuja, Nimbark and Madhva. Shri Vallabhacharya also was born at Kankarkumbh in Andhra. He was a Vallanatiya Brahmin. His gotra was Bharadwaja. The name of the original ancestor of his family was Yagnanarayana Bhatt. He had a wife named Sudharma. The family of

Yagnanarayana Bhatt was famous for piety, religious fervour, charity and devotion to Krishna. The needy and the poor received help from them in various ways. The Gujarati poet-saint Vallabhdas vividly brings out the saintly qualities and noble traits of the ancestors of Shri Vallabhacharyaji in his poem on the birth of Shri Vallabha. The fore fathers of Shri Vallabha were well-known as the performers of great sacrifices like Somayaga etc.

Yagnanarayana Bhatt was a great scholar of Vedic lore. From Yagnanarayana Bhatt, the progenitor of the family down to Shri Laxmana Bhatt, one hundred Somayaga sacrifices had been performed. Tradition has it that the family which performs a hundred Somayagas is blessed by God Himself. Shri Laxmana Bhatt had a firm conviction that God would incarnate in his family as a result of the completion of a hundred Soma sacrifices.

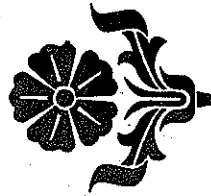
Shri Laxmana Bhatt was proficient in Shastras and a great devotee of God. He had married Ilamagaru who was a sister of the Head of the Charity Department of the King of ^{Vijayanagar} Vijayanagar. After the destruction of Kankarkumbh by Muslim invaders, he migrated to Banaras with a view to settle there. He spent most of his time in the worship of Lord Krishna and the study of religious scriptures. Once he heard the news of the impending invasion of a Muslim Sardar on Banaras.

There was widespread panic and consternation. Under the circumstances it was not possible to stay in Kashi peacefully. Besides, his wife was pregnant. He decided to leave Kashi for some safer place. Shri Laxmana Bhatt along with his wife and relatives started towards the south. When they arrived at Champaranya, Ilamagaru was overcome with fatigue. Long and difficult journey told upon her health. She began to experience pain in the abdomen and she gave birth to a premature child. Considering the child to be still-born and dead, the mother enveloped the babe in the pieces of garments made of leaves and put it in the cavity of a Shami tree. Then they resumed their journey.

Having gone a little distance, the party rested on the bank of the river. Here the couple had a divine vision. They heard the voice of God addressing them as follows- "I have come to you in the form of a newly born child. The child will protect Hindu religion and culture."

Having heard this divine voice in a dream the parents immediately went back to the aforesaid Shami Tree where, to their great joy and surprise, the child was sporting about in the midst of the encircling flames of fire ! No body was ever happier or more fortunate than the parents of the child: There was a halo of divine light round its face. Its eyes were radiating grace and nectar as it were ! It was smiling. The wind was blowing gently.

The ferocious animals forgot their cruel nature in the presence of the deer and gazed at the child with steady eyes. The moon and the auspicious constellation appeared in the sky. The mother Ilamagaru picked up the child and hugged it to her heart. This child later on came to be known as Shri Vallabhacharyaji. He was born on the eleventh day of the black half of Chaitra in Samvat 1529. According to another tradition his birth is considered to have taken place in samvat 1535.



CHAPTER II

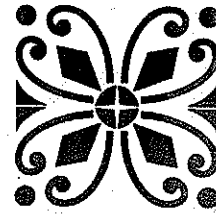
Early-Childhood.

Shri Laxmana Bhatt selected Prayag as his abode for future activities, though peace was restored in Kashi. As the child Vallabha grew up in age, he began to show signs of extraordinary and superhuman powers. He evinced no interest in toys and other child-like pastimes. He took delight in witnessing the divine sports of Shri Krishna as depicted in the Bhagavata. He looked intently at the pictures of lord Shri Krishna drawn on the walls of his neighbours, standing in the sun for hours together.

At the age of five he loudly proclaimed the divine names, 'Ramkrishna Mukund Madho'. He had a sweet and melodious voice. His face was symmetrical and radiant. His smile was catching. Many children came under the spell of his inspired songs and joined in his chanting of the names of God. Even grown-up people stood in speechless wonder to hear the chorus singing of these boys. Little Vallabha was so much lost in the contemplation of the divine sports of Shri Krishna that he fell into a trance and cried aloud while singing. The atmosphere was filled with divine love. The people wondered at the sight of this God-intoxicated child.

Here Shri Vallabha developed friendship with Shyamdas, a carpenter child. Shyamdas was deeply

attached to Shri Vallabha and he served him to the best of his ability. Shri Laxman Bhatt was noted among Pandits for his vast knowledge, saintly life and largeness of heart. Many scholars and learned persons flocked to his house and discussed metaphysical questions. Whenever the discussion presented a riddle which baffled solution, Shri Vallabha muttered the relevant verses from the Bhagavata which contained a clue to the problem under discussion. The Pandits were struck with the uncommon knowledge of Vallabha. Shri Vallabha was invested with the sacred thread in 1535. This event was celebrated with great joy.



CHAPTER III

Study at Banaras.

The Upanayana ceremony marked the beginning of a life of study and Brahmacharya. Shri Laxman Bhatt came to Banaras to educate Shri Vallabha in the traditional scriptures. Here he was placed under the care of a renowned pandit, Vidyavilas Bhattacharya. Shri Vallabha was a precocious child and he studied under him the Vedas, the Upanishads and the six systems of philosophy. Shri Vallabha was inclined to Bhakti from his very childhood. He saw the will of God in everything that happened. He was not proud of his learning. He was destined to be a leader of a great religious movement; yet he was an humble servant of God.

Once a cow belonging to Shri Laxmana Bhatt fell ill. There was no hope of her recovery. Shri Laxman Bhatt and his wife became very unhappy and began to weep. Seeing his parents crying like ordinary ignorant beings, Shri Vallabha tried to assuage their grief in the following words : "In this world death is certain for all. Everybody has to die sooner or later. Fear of death should be got rid of. Whatever happens in this world is but the sport of God. You are both wise and firm believers in God. What to talk of ordinary people if you thus sink in sorrow ! Our cow is not going to die through

the grace of God. But you should not get perturbed even if she dies. The mind should be kept undisturbed in happiness and misery".

With these words Shri Vallabha went to the cow and passed his lotus like hand over her body. And lo ! the cow showed signs of movement and standing up began to lick the hand of Shri Vallabha. All rejoiced at the cow being revived. The people began to talk of the miraculous powers of Vallabha.

Shri Vallabha was gifted with rare intellectual powers. His memory was prodigious. He studied various branches of knowledge. The study of Shri Bhagavata had a special appeal to his devotional heart; and he got mastery over it with a thorough insight into the true meaning and purport of it. He had a wonderful power of eloquence. His critical study of the scriptures made him arrive at the following conclusions :- "The Mayavada of Shankaracharya is not consistent with the meaning of the Vedas. The world is not false, but it is real. Individual soul is a part of God. God is of the essence of joy.

He began to preach and propagate the religious and philosophical principles as embodied in the Gita and the Bhagavata. His superbeloquence, matchless reasoning, masterly study of the shastras and his unique style of presentation and persuasion made a powerful impression on the master minds of Banaras.

The Pandits began to call him 'Bala Saraswati' (an incarnation of Saraswati in the form of a little boy) and 'Vakpati' the master of speech. Being jealous of the rising fame of Vallabha some pandits began to harbour ill-will towards him and began to harass him in various ways. When Laxman Bhatt came to know of this, he called back Shri Vallabha to him and sent him to the south to perfect his studies there.

Here he was put under the care of a great teacher. He taught Vallabha the various scriptures of the Shaiva and Vaishnava faith. Here also he became an object of love and admiration of all on account of his Guru-worship, devotion to God, humility and lovable nature. On completion of his study he begged his Guru to allow him to return. The Guru blessed him and told him to preach the gospel of love and Bhakti to the troubled humanity. He visited with his two brothers and father the famous shrine of Balaji and paid his respects to the Deity. Here he lost his father in Samvat 1544.



CHAPTER IV

His First All-India Tour

The death of Shri Laxmana Bhatt came as a terrible shock to the family. The mother was deeply grieved at the unfortunate death of Bhattaji. Shri Vallabha consoled the bereaved mother by saying that God's will is supreme.

Now Shri Vallabha wanted to start on a mission of his life. He wanted to tour the land to make a first hand study of the socio-religious conditions of India and the spiritual needs of the people. He requested his mother to bless him in his new Venture. Shri Vallabha was about sixteen years old at this time. Mother was familiar with the uncommon powers of her son. Moreover she thought that pilgrimage to various cultural centres of India would broaden his outlook and develop his personality. So she consented to the request of Vallabha.

Taking leave of his mother, Shri Vallabha started on his first tour in the company of a few disciples, chief among whom was Krishanadas Meghan. He first visited his birth place, Champaranya. In this dense forest, there was not a single well. Hence the passers-by and pilgrims had to undergo untold difficulties for want of water. Shri Vallabha got a well dug by his pupils and made a reading of Shrimad Bhagavata on its outskirts. The party resumed journey.

When they passed through Vardha, the son of a rich family renounced his wealth and became his disciple. His name was Damodardas who is ranked as the foremost follower among the eightyfour disciples of Vallabha. He later on exerted a powerful influence in shaping the history of the Sampradaya.

From Champaranya Shri Mahaprabhu (as Vallabha came to be addressed) went to Jagannath Puri. Here his discourses on Shri Bhagavata attracted large audiences in the temple of Puri. The people believed him to be Shukadevaji incarnate. His words went straight into the hearts of the people. The fame of Shri Vallabha went to the ears of the king of Puri. He was religious minded. He took interest in the promotion of religion.

Once a great difference of opinion arose between him and his court pandits as regards some religious point. So he convened a great assembly of scholars to know the real truth. Shri Vallabha was invited to the assembly. In spite of heated and prolonged discussions, no decision could be arrived at. But Shri Vallabha cut the Gordian knot and put an end to the controversy by giving his verdict in the following verse :-

एकं शास्त्रं देवकीपुत्रगीतमेको देवो देवकीपुत्र एव ।
मन्त्रोपेक्षस्तस्य नामानि यानि कर्मापेक्षं तस्य देवस्य सेवा ॥

[The only scripture is the Gita which is sung by the son of Devaki, the son of Devaki is the only supreme

God. The only Mantra (the mystic word) is his names and the only Karma (activity) is the service unto that God]

This judgment of Shri Vallabha won him the encomium of all present there. Many were converted to his point of view who became his disciples. Wherever Shri Vallabha went, the people flocked to him to listen to his ambrosial sermons and embraced his faith. During his pilgrimage, he visited Ujjain among many other places. His visits were marked by a new spirit of spiritual revival among the people. From Ujjain Shri Mahaprabhu came to Govardhan Hill in the Uttar Bharat. He put up at the residence of Sadu Pande, a great Bhakta of Krishna. This event took place on ninth of the black half of Vaishakh, Samvat 1545. Shri Nathji had manifested Himself on the Hill and Shri Vallabha went up the hill to see the Swarupa of Shri Nathji. He was face to face with the Image of Lord Krishna. The divine vision of God stirred the innermost springs of his heart. His heart could not contain the surging emotions of love and Bhakti. Tears streamed down the eyes of Shri Vallabha. He bowed down his head before the deity. His aspirations were fulfilled. He got the image removed from the hill and got it installed under the Khijada tree in a small temple. The service of this image of Shri Nathji was entrusted to Sadu Pande. The manifestation of Shri

Nathji is meant for the salvation of all the Jivas (souls) in this Kaliyuga. The poet of 'Chorashi Vaishnava Na Dhol' says the same thing.*

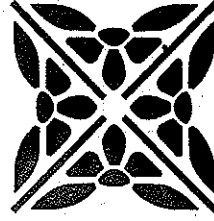
Shri Vallabha had a great fascination for the land of Vraja, sanctified by the lotus feet of Lord Shri Krishna. The divine sports of Shri Krishna at Gokul and Vrindavan had a perennial appeal to his heart. When he meditated on the esoteric meaning of the Lila he fell into a trance and enjoyed communion with God. Thus it was that he became very fond of living in Vraja.

He first visited Vraja in samvat 1545 and spent the monsoon season there. He went on foot around all the places Lord Shri Krishna had sanctified by his divine sports.

He spent nearly two months in the land of Vraja, covering all the sacred spots hallowed by the memory of Lord Shri Krishna. He came to Gokul on Janmashtami and started the practice of celebrating the festival of the birth of lord Shri Krishna. In the same way he initiated the 'Annakuta' festival on Shri Giriraja Hill. Besides he started reciting the Bhagavata at convenient places in

“ગ્રંથ નીચ ને ધરશે એમનાં ધ્યાન ને,
ભવસાગરમાં તરવાને સિદ્ધાંત ને;
તે માટે શ્રી ચણ્દ્રાણુએ પ્રગટ કર્યા,
કલિયુગ ભવને સુધારવા શ્રીનાથ ને”

Vraja. In this way he delighted the hearts of the people of Vraja by inspiring in them love for God and glorifying the divine sports of Shri Krishna. Now he determined to spend the whole Chaturmasa in Vraja every year. From Vraja he went to Adel to meet his mother.



CHAPTER V

The Writing of The Granthas.

During his first tour Shri Vallabha had come in contact with people of different faiths and beliefs. He saw the latent seeds of Bhakti in the hearts of the people of Vraja but they were divested of Gnana (Knowledge) and Vairagya (dispassion). The people at large followed religious practices in a blind manner. The people had become selfish and hypocritical. There was moral degeneration every where. No body knew the real essence of religion. Some ascetics and Sadhus put too much stress on knowledge and called upon the people to renounce the world. While some others preached the mortification of the body by undergoing fasts and penances. The common people were at a loss to know the real way of Moksha (liberation). Only a few people could follow the path of Knowledge and Vairagya. Many persons of immature intellect, in a fit of passion, renounced their home etc and became mendicants and ascetics. But they took to irreligious practices. This was the condition of the people. Shri Vallabha has given a graphic picture of the society of his times in his Krishnashraya Grantha. He says, "The country is overrun by the Mlechchhas who in their fanatical zeal persecute the people. The holy places are inhabited by rogues and

wicked persons. So called good persons have become egoistic."

Shri Vallabha felt the necessity of writing serviceable literature, expounding true religion to the people. He composed various dissertations based on the Vedas, the Gita, the Brahmsutras and the Bhagavata. He first of all composed the first chapter of 'Tattvadipa Nibandha' in which he has evaluated the different Schools of thought and pointed out their drawbacks. He has shown in it the futility of Gnana and Vairagya which may be divorced from Bhakti. He does not approve of renouncing the world until a man is rooted and firmly fixed in the feeling of Vairagya. It is better for him to live at home and serve the lord.

Shri Vallabha bitterly criticises the doctrine of Mayavada which erroneously preaches the falsity of the world and the illusory character of Jiva. Shri Vallabha held that both Jiva and Jagat are evolved from Brahma and hence are real. All the individual souls are the parts of God. Hence the service of the needy, down trodden and forsaken souls is the service unto God. He who inflicts pain on living creatures indirectly pains the Lord. Hence no living being should be insulted or roughly treated. But we should desire the welfare of all, through the service of God. Service of God is the real penance.

All the members of the family should direct their

efforts to the service of God. The home should be converted into a temple of the Supreme Being. Time should not be wasted in ordinary useless talk. We should suffer with patience the misery that befalls us. Human mind with all its limitations, cannot understand the secrets of life. Inscrutable are the ways of God. We should have firm faith in the goodness of God in whatever happens to us. Certain things, events or incidents are beyond our comprehension. But full conviction must grow in us that everything happens through the Will of God. This is, in brief, the synopsis of the teachings of Shri Vallabhacharya.

Shri Vallabha took three years to complete his first tour. Then he stayed with his mother at Adel and devoted some years to the writing of philosophical works.



CHAPTER VI

Second All India Tour.

Shri Vallabha's second tour began in 1550, Samvat. It was his all-India pilgrimage, covering all the principal seats of learning and sacred places in Bharat. He disseminated the principles of **Bhagavata Dharma**.

To begin with, he went to Govardhan to have the darshana of Shri Nathji. Here he initiated a particular mode of worship. He appointed Shri Krishnadas Patel as the manager of the temple and entrusted the work of service and Kirtana to Shri Ramdas Chauhan and Kumbhandas.*

A cow was absolutely needed for the daily service of Shri Nathji. But Shri Vallabha kept no belongings with him. He went about the world with only a dhoti and an upper garment. He was the glowing example of simplicity incarnate. He carried with him, however, the Image of God. A little golden ring was decorating the finger of the idol Vallabh gave it to Damodardas to purchase a cow with. Damodardas bought two cows from the proceeds of the ring. When Sadu Pande and other disciples of Vallabha came to know of this, they offered in service

*શ્રીનાથજીને સેવાના ત્યાં ક્યાં બહુ પ્રકાર;

અતિસુખદરીતે જગતહિતને, ક્યાં એ વિસ્તાર (૧૯૫)

- 'પ્રાકટ્ય સિદ્ધાંત'; માંગલ્ય ત્રીજું.

many cows to lord Shri Nathji.

Shri Vallabh then, proceeded to Gokul and put up at Govind Ghat on the bank of the Jamuna. A big peepal tree still exists on this Ghat During his first tour. Shri Vallabh had come across people who were voluptuous, superstitious and fallen from the path of true religion. They took delight in fruitless argumentation and cold logical discussions, They were impure in thoughts and moral conduct. He deeply pondered over this deplorable state of things. The sad picture of the society came to his mind often and often. He was greatly troubled in his mind to notice the misery and ignorance of the people.*



* શ્રી કૃષ્ણનેક જીવોદ્ધારાર્થમાજ્ઞાસોદ્દમેતે જીવાઃ સ્વભાવતો દુષ્ટા ધનાઘ્નસક્તા દુષ્ટપદાર્થે વ્યાપ્તાઃ કથમેતેષાં દોષનિવૃત્તિરુદ્ધારઃ
અવિષ્યતીતિ ચિન્તાકુલાન્ શ્રીવલ્લભાચાર્યાન્ વિદિત્વા ભગવાન્
ઇકાન્તસમયે ચિન્તાનિવર્તકમુપાયમુકુવા ।

The Commentary of Shri Kalyanaray on 'Siddhanta Rahasya.'

CHAPTER VII

The Behest of God.

The dark and dismal picture of the society of his times agitated his heart. Shree Vallabhacharyaji's kind heart could not tolerate all these things. He vigorously applied his mind to the problem of removing the wicked propensities of the ignorant Jivas. How could he make the Jivas pure and guileless ? How could he turn them to the path of Bhakti ? How could he remove the sorrows and miseries of mankind ? These thoughts preoccupied his mind. He wanted to give to mankind a message of hope, love and service to God.

This feeling of uneasiness reached its climax on the eleventh day of the bright half of Shravana. Tears rolled down his eyes. It is said that God appeared before Shri Vallabha and gave him the mantra (Mystic formula) of Brahma-Sambandha and instructed him to initiate the jivas in the grace of God by giving them this Mantra.

The gist of this Sharana Mantra is as follows :- "God is the real owner of all the things in this world. Things which I consider my own do not really belong to me. The Jivas are unhappy because the element of joy has disappeared from them. Therefore I surrender to God whatever I possess. Oh ! Krishna ! I am thy servant". Those who take this pledge automatically

become the humble servants of God. This spiritual initiation is a great turning point in the life of a devotee. Distinctions of high and low have no place among the initiated souls, because all are servants of the same God. The Bhaktas will feel joy and happiness in the service of mankind because every thing belongs to God".

Vallabha's sorrow vanished. His joy knew no bounds. He contemplated on the divine form of the Lord and offered him a saffron-coloured garland consisting of 360 threads. God then disappeared ! Shri Vallabha could not bear the pangs of separation. In this love-lorn condition Shri Mahaprabhu began to describe the sweet and enchanting form of Lord Shri Krishna.*

Thus Shri Vallabha sincerely felt that he was commissioned by God to spread the cult of Bhakti. He went from place to place, delivering this message of God.

Shri Vallabha with his devoted band of followers went to Bahulavana. The Muslim Suba of that place was harassing the Hindu population. He had forbidden the worship of the image of the cow. Here he performed a miracle. The inanimate cow was transformed into a living animal ! The Hakem surrendered himself to Shri

* अधरं मधुरं वदनं मधुरं नमनं मधुरं हसितं मधुरम् ।
हृदयं मधुरं गमनं मधुरं, मधुराधिपते रखिलं मधुरम् ॥

Mahaprabhu and lifted ban on the worship of the cow. In the land of Vraja, the land associated with the divine childhood of Shri Krishna, Shri Vallabha experienced the strong feeling of separation from Krishna. The sacred places like Gokula, Govardhan and Vrindavana recalled the memories of the divine sports of Krishna, and Vallabha feeling reminiscent of these, lost often his consciousness as he had identified himself with body and soul with Krishna.

After having moved over the different sacred places in Vraja, Shri Vallabha came to Gahvar Van. Here he saw a big serpent being stung on all sides by innumerable ants. A great change suddenly came over the face of Vallabha. All his joy and exaltation of spirit passed away. He was plunged in deep sorrow. His disciples were at a loss to understand the real cause of this unexpected change in spirits. They suspected some wrong act on their own part. The disciples became greatly worried over this. Gathering up courage however, Shri Damodardas requested Shri Vallabha to tell them the cause of his grief. Hearing the words of Damodardas, he, with tears in his eyes, pointed to the serpent being eaten up by the ants. The Cobra was hissing and dashing against the ground.

Shri Vallabha explained the whole phenomenon, as follows :- Look here; this serpent was a great religious

head in its former birth. The ants which are devouring its body were his disciples. He had amassed a great fortune from his votaries. Instead of spending it in the service of God or in meritorious deeds, he squandered it in reckless extravagance. His disciples, following in the footsteps of their Guru, began to lead the life of sensual pleasures. In due course of time the Mahant and his disciples left this mortal world. The Mahant was reborn as the surpent and his disciples became the ants in the next birth.

To the Guru the disciples said "why did you spoil our lives if you had no power to make us free from the bonds of Samsara ? Why did you accept our wealth ?"

These ants are retaliating with a vengeance. Therefore he who aspires to be a Guru should possess the necessary requisites. If an aspirant to devotion fails to find out a Guru worthy of the name, he should rather stay at home and engage himself in the service of God and the reading of the Bhagavata. He will, in this way, realise God.

Thus saying Shri Vallabha took pity on the Serpent and sprinkled water on it from his holy bowl. The Cobra and the ants were released from their present wretched birth.

Having finished the round of Vraja, Shri Vallabha came over to Gujarat. Visiting Siddhapur and other

places he came to Bahucharaji. Here the Vama Margis held their sway and indulged in hideous practices in the name of religion. They extolled the use of meat and wine in the name of Goddess Kali. Shri Mahaprabhuji was greatly pained at this. He persuasively reasoned with the misguided followers of Mother Goddess as follows :-

"It is very bad to indulge in Shastric discussions without proper study of the scriptures. We are Hindus and liquor drinking has been considered as one of the hineous sins by Manu in his 'Manusmriti'. It is your duty as Hindus to desist from such sinful acts".

Kali is the mother of the universe. And all the creatures are her children. How can the mother be propitiated by the flesh of her children ? Hence it is your duty to give up sinful practices like these and worship the Goddess sincerely".

Then Shri Vallabha came to Dwarka. Here he paid his respects to Lord Krishna. Thence he and his party went to Sindh. At that time Sindh was inhabited by Mlechcha people. People lacked in moral and religious fervour. They did not observe the rules of religious conduct. Even in outward appearance the people looked like Mlechchas. Most of the people had lost their faith in Hinduism, their ancestral religion.

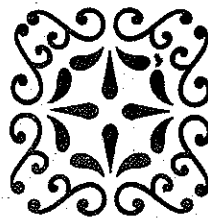
The chief mission of the birth of Shri Vallabhacharyaji was to uplift women and shudras.

Among the one hundred and eight names of Shri Mahaprabhuji, Shri Hariraji enumerates the following :
सर्वोद्धाराय नमः । पतितसंग्रहणाय नमः । अक्षरणशरणाय नमः । स्त्रीशुद्रादिहितकर्त्रे नमः । पतिततारकाय नमः ।

Here there were two great military-officers. One was Magadh Baudha and the other a Muslim. Both were intimate friends. Once while they were discussing some religious matter, they came to such a point that the controversy assumed a serious turn. Baudh officer believed that non-violence was the highest religion, while his Muslim friend advocated violence. Both were in search of a great judge who could give his decision in the matter with authority and conviction. At that time they chanced to see Shri Vallabhacharya. Both of them were greatly impressed with high spirituality and wisdom of Shri Vallabha and they requested him to be an arbitrator between them.

Shri Vallabha listened to their arguments peacefully. Then he exposed the hollowness of the arguments advances in favour of violence, and gave a learned discourse on the meaning of violence and non-violence. He further explained that those who take pleasure in the welfare of all living beings know the essence of Godhead. The Muslim general was deeply impressed by the sermon of Vallabha and he accepted him as his Guru.

Shri Vallabha was an incarnation of Divine Love. Men of God see no distinctions of caste or sex in the sphere of Bhakti. True excellence of man consists in Bhakti alone. This new convert to the faith of Vallabha was renamed as Aryakhan who began to lead the life of a true Vaishnava.



CHAPTER VIII

Acclaimed as a World Teacher.

Returning from Sindh, Shri Vallabha wended his way to the south, the land of his ancestors.

While on travel, he halted at Mandar Madhusudan. When Vallabha was reciting the Bhagavat, a young one of a deer, Shivering with fear from a lion, hurriedly hid itself in his lap. Shri Vallabha took pity on it and kindly patted it. He put his thumb into its mouth, thereby putting wonderful power in it. Thus the fawn was rendered safe from the attack of the lion.

Shri Vallabha visited Agrahar, his native place and then came to Vidyanagar, which was a great centre of learning in the South.

It was famous for its splendour and wealth. King Krishnadeva ruled over the kingdom. The King was a great patron of art. He was brave, religious and noble hearted. He had a leaning towards Shaivism, while the queen was inclined towards Madhva Vaishnavism. Both the king and the queen were greatly devoted to each other; but they widely differed in their religious beliefs.

In deference to the wishes of the Queen, the king held a great religious convention to which all the religious heads, the pandits, savants and saints were invited. The assembly divided itself into two groups, the Shaivas and

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the Vaishnavas. The followers of Shaivism contended that God was attributeless, while the followers of Vaishnava sects maintained that God was full of divine attributes. In the bitter controversy that ensued the Vaishnavas seemed to have lost the ground.

At this very critical juncture Shri Vallabha arrived on the scene. His accidental arrival in Vidyanagar was a God-send to the Vaishnavas. Shri Vallabha was specially invited by the king to continue the thread of the debate. This occasion afforded him an excellent opportunity to proclaim before the learned audience his views on Vedic Religion and Bhakti Marga. Shri Vallabha took up cudgels on behalf of the Vaishnava school of thought and carried on discussions with the Acharyas of Shaivism. Shri Vallabha explained the secret of Hinduism as follows :-

"Hindu religion considers Lord Krishna to be the Highest Deity. This Supreme Being is not inanimate or feelingless. But it is of the nature of consciousness and bliss. He is all prevailing. The individual souls are the parts of Brahman. God is the creator of this jagat, and hence this world is true. If the world is unreal, the all powerful nature of God is contradicted. Therefore giving up frivolous arguments, resign your selves to the service of God. Take delight in the welfare of all living creatures. Get rid of worldly attachments. Be contented with what

you get and have, and direct your mind and senses in the service of God. Accept the cult of service to God. That will lead to the realization of God. Real devotees see the divine Lilas of God. The Lilas of God are eternal. Hence God is full of divine qualities."

Shri Vallabha took twenty eight days to explain the principles of Brahmanavada which is based on the authority of Shruti. According to Shri Vallabhacharya every letter of the Veda is valid. He is opposed to the forced interpretation of the Veda. It is a crime to distort the meaning of the Veda to suit one's own point of view. The knowledge of the Vedas is revealed to those who are in the grace of God. Lord Shri Krishna has bequeathed to us the 'Gita' containing the essence of the Vedas, Upanishadas and the Brahma Sutras. Shri Bhagavata is an elaboration of the 'Gita'. Hence Bhagavad Gita is the sacred scripture of Hinduism

His natural interpretation of the vedic-passages, his incontrovertible arguments, his wonderful hold on the various shastras turned the scales in favour of Vaishnavism.

The opponents could not hold their own against the powerful logic of Shri Vallabhacharya. Shankarites were discomfited in the contest in the end. The representatives of the diverse faiths and sects were mightily pleased with his arguments and comprehensive

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knowledge.

He was acclaimed as the undisputed conqueror in the debate. The King arranged a religious ceremony called the Kanakabhisheka in which he was weighed against gold. All the Acharyas, learned men, thinkers, statesmen and citizens were present at the ceremony. Highest honours were conferred upon him at that time.*

The King offered all the gold used in the ceremony. But Shri Vallabha was indifferent to worldly riches. Accordingly he did not accept the gold coins but he expressed his desire to distribute it among the Brahmins and the poor people. He accepted only seven coins which he used in making the anklets for the idol of Shri Nathaji. Here the King and many people turned into his disciples.

From Vidyannagar he proceeded to Thaneshwar. Many disciples of Vallabha lived here. Once pandit named Ramanand Mishra had also become his disciple. Shri Vallabha had great love for him. Whenever he came to his town, he stayed at his place. Once Shri

જોસાડી આસને, અતિ કીધું તે તહાં સન્માન
હૂન સોલ સહસ્ર કનકને, કરાવ્યું તે સ્નાન.
સ્નાનોદક તે ત્યજ મેલી, ત્યાં થકી ક્યું પ્રયાણ
ધર્મ સ્થાપ્યો જગતમાં, જશ વાણ્યો નિશાણ ૧૮૭

(પ્રકટ્ય સિદ્ધાંત)

Mahaprabhu after reading some portion from the Bhagavata went to sleep.

In the early hours of the morning pandit Ramanand got up and asked his wife to collect the cow-dung, otherwise the Vaishnavas would take it away. Shri Mahaprabhu heard the words of the Pandit. He was taken aback at the selfish thoughts of his disciple ! It was strange that Ramananda was still ignorant of the greatness of the Vaishnavas. He should not have entertained such narrow ideas in his mind. Shri Ramanand had fallen from the grace of God. He had not truly understood the secret of self surrender. Why should he worry for the dung which was to be used in the service of God ?

Shri Mahaprabhu left his place immediately. All the Vaishnavas beseeched him to be kind to them. But he did not pay heed to their words. How can he stay in the house in which the very spirit of Bhakti was violated ? Shri Ramanand repented for his sin. During his third tour Shri Vallabha forgave his faults and accepted him as his disciple.



CHAPTER IX

Marriage

In Benaras there lived a pious Brahmin. He had a beautiful daughter named Mahalaxmi. He approached the mother of Vallabha and proposed to offer his daughter in marriage to Shri Vallabha. Shri Mahaprabhu was commanded by God to enter the life of a Grihashtha. Knowing the will of God, mother accepted the proposal. The marriage was celebrated solemnly in the presence of large gathering of his relatives and disciples.

Shree Vallabha's prime mission was to propagate the sublime ideals of Pushtimarga and to initiate the deserving souls into the mystery of God's grace.

Once he was standing on the bank of the sacred Ganges. When he came out of the river after his ablutions when his favourite disciple Shri Krishnadas Meghan asked him, "What happens to a person who commits suicide in the water of the holy Ganges?"

Shri Vallabha replied: "The Ganges has come out of the Lotus feet of Lord Vishnu. Her mere touch sanctifies the fallen souls. Saints become the worshippers of Krishna. Those who end their lives in the Ganges go to Hell and remain there for seven successive births. The Ganges does not accept such

persons. No person should get dispirited of his life under any circumstances"

No sooner did he utter these words than a man running up to him fell at his feet. This unhappy man was on the point of committing suicide. Anxiety was writ large on his face. His eyes were pale and laden with misery. He seemed to have become desperate on account of unbearable sorrow. Shri Mahaprabhu raised him up and asked him to tell his story.

The man said, "O My Lord, had I not heard your wise words, I would have plunged myself into the waters of the river. Your words came as a soothing balm to my troubled mind. You have transformed my life, as it were. I was defeated by the pandits of Kashi in a religious assembly. I had won many debates, silencing my opponents. But it was for the first time that I was defeated in the contest. Overtaken with despair and sense of shame, I thought it fit to end my life. But your prophetic words have changed the course of my life. Be pleased to accept me as your disciple."

Shri Vallabha touched with pity, gave him Nama Nivedan Mantra and made him his disciple. At the time of initiation, Shri Vallabha explained to him the meaning of Pushti. i.e. the grace of God. Pushtimarga is the path seeking the grace of the Lord. No amount of individual effort or Sadhana is considered of any avail in the

CHAPTER X

Pandits of Kashi silenced.

Once Shri Mahaprabhuji was camping at Charanat. The place was full of natural scenery. There was calm and peace everywhere-its tranquil and serene atmosphere was conducive to a life of service and contemplation. Shri Vallabha had established his reputation as an eminent Acharya of his time; and hundreds of pandits from far off places came to him to understand his philosophical doctrines. All his time was taken up in dispelling their doubts. This came in the way of the regular service of God.

Shri Vallabha felt the necessity of writing down his definite views on different schools of thought in the form of a systematic treatise. He accordingly composed a booklet called 'Patravallambana' which was intended to serve as a compendium to his philosophy of pure Monism. The various pages of this treatise were hung on the portals of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. It was an open challenge to Mayavada and other schools of thought. He silenced once for all the protagonists of Shankara's philosophy.

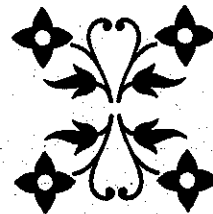
Shri Vallabha thence went to Adeli to stay there. He put up a temporary hut there for his residence. Here Shri Gopinathji was born on the tenth of the dark half of Asvin Samvat 1570. At this residence he composed also his famous commentary on Vedanta Sutras of Badarayana, called 'Anubhashya'.



MARRIAGE

Marga. Vedic rites and Social practices have secondary importance in this Bhakti-Marga. Devotees of God only think of His happiness and lovingly serve Him. They do everything in order to please him. They never waste their time in shastric discussions. Therefore the seeker after truth should give up useless activities and turn his mind inward to realise God within his heart."

The name of this disheartened soul was Rana Vyasa. His drooping spirit got new strength. The message of Vallabha brought about a miraculous change in his heart. A great scholar, puffed up with pride was turned into an humble servant of God. Ever since that time Rana Vyas spent his time in chanting the divine names and reading the Subodhini a commentary on the Bhagavata.



book of the Bhagavata. His poems breathe the spirit of intense longing of a devout heart for communion with God.

From Vraja Shri Mahaprabhu went to Adel. Shri Vallabha had great fascination for this place on account of its natural beauty and calm atmosphere. The ruler of the place had great respect for him and made his stay as comfortable as possible. Here Shri Vitthalnathji, the second son of Shri Vallabha was born. He was the worthy son of a worthy father. Pushtimarga flourished under him in full form.

Shri Paramanandas was another disciple of Vallabha. He was gifted with the poetic talent of a high order. His songs were listened to with rapt attention by Shri Vallabha. On hearing his songs, Vallabha experienced the thrill of 'ecstatic joy'.

Once Shri Mahaprabhu along with Damodardas, Krishnadas and Parmanandas started for Vraja. Shri Vallabha was pining for the sight of Vraja. On the way he asked Shri Parmanandas to sing the glory of God. The poet seeing that Shri Mahaprabhuji was wistfully longing for Vraja, sang the song appropriate to the sentiment generated in the heart of the Master.*

*હરિ તેરી લીલાકી શુદ્ધિ આવે,
કમલનેન મનમોહિની મૂરતિ, મન મન ચિત્ર બનાવે (૧)

CHAPTER XI

Meeting of Suradas.

Once Shri Mahaprabhuji was going to Vraja. On the way he met the famous poet Surdas who lived at Gaughat near Agra. Listening to his lyrical poems on the Lilas of God, the people became mad after him. Surdas hailed from a well to do family. But on account of some conflict with the Moghul Emperor he lost his all wealth.

Many became the disciples of Suradas on hearing his soul-stirring songs. Therefore he was called 'Suraswami'. This poet saint happened to meet Shri Vallabha. Surdas was greatly impressed by the divine personality of Vallabha and he became his humble disciple.

Thus the brightest luminary of Hindi literature sang the glory of Lord Shri Krishna in his innumerable lyrics. At the touch of the master, the poet Surdas became a world famous poet.*

Surdas selected Govardhan Hill for his abode. He spent his whole life in the service and devotion of Lord Krishna. His Padas (hymns) deal with the narration of the divine sports of Shri Bala Krishna described in the tenth

*“કરમયોગ પુનિ જ્ઞાન ઉપાસન, સબહી જગ ભરયાયો,
શ્રી વલ્લભ ગુરુ તત્ત્વ સુનાયો, લીલાભેદ બતાયો,
તા દિનને હરિલીલા ગાઈ, એક લક્ષ પદબંધ”

CHAPTER XII

Disappearance.

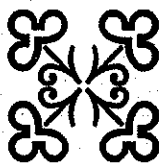
It was the third day of the bright half of Ashadh, samvat 1587. Shri Vallabh was living on the Hanuman Ghat at Kashi. Observing fast and withdrawing himself from the outer world, he was engrossed in the contemplation of God.

Shri Vallabha, it appeared, had received a higher call to leave this world-Shri Vallabha was busy with writing his commentary on Shrimad Bhagavata. But he received the call of God thrice. He left the work of 'Subodhini' unfinished, and took Sannyasa (Renunciation) as ordained by the shastras.

It was the seventh day of his fast and vow of silence. Thousands of people had collected at Hanuman Ghat to receive his last blessings. Both his sons, Sri Gopinath and Sri Vitthalnath were present. Shri Vitthalnathji requested him to give his parting message. But as Shri Vallabha was observing the vow of silence, he wrote three and a half verses on the ground. His memorable words read as follows :- "Always keep yourselves aloof from worldly attachments. Directing your senses Godwards worship Shri Krishna, the Lord of the Gopis, with all your heart. Lord Shri Krishna is not of this world. He does not believe in service without love".

Hearing this song, Shri Vallabha fell into a trance. He became fully absorbed in the Lila of Lord Krishna-Damodardas and other devotees were taken aback, Shri Parmananddas became sad and sorrowful. After three days Shri Vallabha regained his consciousness.

Shri Vallabha was thus an apostle of love. He was God-intoxicated. There are many such episodes in the life of Shri Vallabha.

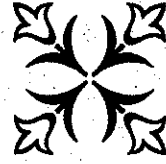


બારક લલિત બચ માયા કરિ, સો કેસે વિસરાવે;
મુખ મુસિકાન બંક અવલોકનિ, ચાલ મનોહર ભાવે. (૨)
કબલુક નિબિડ તિમિર આલિંગન, કબલુક પિક સુર ગાવે,
કબલુક સંભમ 'કવાસિ કવાસિ' કહિ સંગલીન ઉઠી ધાવે. (૩)
કબલુક નેન મૂઠી અંતરગત, મનિ-માલા પહિરાવે,
પરમાનંદ પ્રભુ શ્યામ ધ્યાન કરિ, એસે વિરહ જગાવે. (૪)

At this time a voice from the sky was heard saying "If you have firm faith in me, you will flourish and will not come to grief". With these words Shri Mahaprabhuji stood up. His body had become emaciated on account of the prolonged fasts. However there was divine lustre on his face. He was incessantly uttering the names of God. He had worn only one piece of garment covering his waist.

He walked slowly to the Ganges and bowed to her. He entered the holy waters and suddenly disappeared into the lap of Mother Ganges. A great column of dazzling light appeared in the Sky.

Hundred of his disciples wept bitterly and some having been unable to bear the pangs of separation followed their Master quitting this mortal world. !



CHAPTER XIII

Under the banner of Pushtimarga.

Shri Mahaprabhuji has composed a number of works, all in Sanskrit. Anubhashya, Nibandha, Subodhiniji and Shodasha Granthas are chief among them.

Shri Mahaprabhuji had a number of disciples including Kings, poets, Shudras and people from the low castes, even Mahomedans.

Among the poets the following names are noteworthy:-Surdasji, Parmanandadas, Krishnadas, Kumbhandas, Gopaldas, Gopaldas of Itola, Kaviraj Bhat, Bhagwandas, Vishnudas Chhipa, Gopaldas of Kashi, Padmanabhadas, the son of Sheth Purshottamdas, Junior Purshottamdas, Mukundadas and Alikhan Pathan.

The Shudras and Atishudras who formed the lowest rung of the Hindu Society came to occupy a position of honour under the auspices of Pushtimarga. Under the influence of Shri Mahaprabhu they had become the ideal devotees of God. Krishnadas Adhikari was a Patel by caste, but he was given the rare privilege of worshipping and rendering service to the shrine of Shri Nathji. Yadavendradas Potter, Vishnudas Chhipa, Shyamdas Carpenter, Kumbhandas Gorava, Khetu, Deepo, Rupo and Toto-all belonging to the Shudraclass

were his disciples.*

Caste is not the criterion of an eligibility to this Marga. Vaishnavas of this faith form a hierarchy of their own in which spiritual equality of all is recognised, notwithstanding their caste distinctions.

Shri Vallabhacharyaji was one of those Acharya who welcomed the Yavanas into their fold. Alikhan Pathan, the Governor of Mahavan and Aryakhan of Sindh were the disciples of Shri Vallabhacharyaji. Moghul Emperor Humayun was greatly impressed by the towering personality of Shri Mahaprabhu and his Queen Hamidabegam had given in gift to Vallabha, certain villages in Vraja which are still in possession of his descendants. This shows the extent of respect and veneration in which Shri Vallabhacharya was held by the emperor Humayun.

Sikandar Lodi, who was cruel and fanatic was profoundly impressed by the teachings of Shri Vallabhacharyaji. He held so much respect for Acharya Vallabha that he got Vallabha's portrait prepared by his court painter Honhar. *The original drawing of Shri

*ખેતુ, રૂપો, દીયો, તોતો કાંછડ નતે ચાર;

પ્રીત પૂર્વક રહે પરસ્પર ભાગ્યનો નહિ પાર.

(પ્રાકટ્ય સિદ્ધાંત, ચાંગલ્ય ચોથું કહી ૧૩)

*નાગર સમુગ્રથ પૃષ્ઠ ૩૨

Vallabha is now in the possession of the King of Kisangadh.

Mohamad Begado, the Sultan of Gujarat had forbidden the public celebration of Hindu festivals and the taking out of religious processions etc. Shri Vallabha was taken out in procession wending its way through the thoroughfares of the capital. But the King was struck with the extraordinary power of Shri Vallabha and he allowed the procession to pass under his gallery.

One Rustam Ali, the Collector of Mathura was a terror to the Hindu population. He had hit upon a novel plan of persecuting the Hindus. He had put up a mechanical device at the bathing ghat of the Yamuna. Those who passed under that machine had his tuft of hair chopped off ! Shri Vallabha could not brook this insult to the Hindu religion. And he decided to remove this grievance. Shri Vallabha to gether with Keshava Bhutt Kashmiri and other disciples deliberately passed through the place where the machine was installed. But lo ! the machine could not operate on them. This miracle brought the Suba to his senses. He was compelled to remove the machine forthwith from that place.



CHAPTER XIV

A Retrospect.

Shri Mahaprabhuji, has brought under the banner of Pushtimarga, Shudras, Ati Shudras, the outcaste and the Yavanas. Some of his followers were those who were guilty of trespassing the social laws and customs viz. widow remarriage, inter-caste marriage etc. He has stopped wherever possible, the dinners given after the dead, animal sacrifices, the use of animal flesh, liquor drinking and other evil practices.

Wherever he heard of the ill-treatment of women, he exercised his influence to stop it. Shri Vallabhacharyaji was not a social reformer. Social reform was an offshoot of his religious mission. His chief aim was the propagation of the cult of Krishna Bhakti.

His residence at Adel was frequently visited by the famous Acharys, the saints and scholars of his time.

The then Shankaracharya Madhusudan Saraswati, Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Keshava Bhatt Kashmiri, the famous poet-saint Surdas and a host of celebrities of his time came to visit Shri Vallabhacharya.

Shri Vallabha hated pomp and show. He liked solitude and peace. All his Bethakas (halting places) are situated in secluded places in midst of natural

surroundings. He selected for his temporary stay during his journey only those places which were conducive to the growth of spiritual life.

He made all his followers give up lust for money. He himself never touched money belonging other persons. He was a true democrat in spirit and he started the practice of getting the Vaishnavas initiated into the fold of Pushtimarga by his worthy followers. This was done with a view to carrying the message of Pushtimarga to the farthest corners of the land.

Shet Purushottamdas of Kashi, Gopaldas of Naroda, Pandit Ramanand of Thaneshwar and a few others were fortunate to get this unique privilege of initiation. This shows the cosmopolitan nature of Pushtimarga in the beginning of its inception.

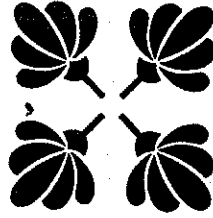
His three tours of Bharat were undertaken to propagate the cult of Krishna Bhakti. There is no other religion higher than the chanting of the divine name of Lord Krishna. According to Vallabha, Lord Krishna is the highest Divinity. He tried to wean away people from the worship of minor gods and goddesses who are the partial manifestation of Brahman. He preached absolute surrender to Lord Krishna. A Pushtimargiya devotee is enjoined to cultivate divine qualities like Truth, Fearlessness and purity of the self.

Shri Vallabhacharyaji was a prophet of love. He

came to this world so that people might walk on the path of God.

Love of God is the highest idea of humanity-He showed us the simple way of life - a life transfigured by pure love and service to Shri Krishna. Love of God must find expression in our daily life - It must come from the depth of our heart.

Shri Vallabha preached the principles of Bhagavata Dharma-the only religion of mankind. Our thousand bows to him !



CHAPTER XV

SUDDHADVAITA PHILOSOPHY THE SYSTEM OF VALLABHACHARYA

By

LATE MR. MULACHANDRA T. TELIVALA, B.A., LL.B.

The fifteenth century is unique in the history of the religious development of India. It was in this century that the wave of *bhakti* passed over the continent of India and swept away with it the narrow exclusiveness of the old Vedic religion. This century has the honour of having produced masterminds who would have gained due recognition in any country and at any time. Among these masterminds were the two famous friends Sri Vallabhacharya and Caitanya. Caitanya moved the whole of Bengal, and through the teachings of Vallabhacharya the whole of Gujarat, Kathiavada and Gokula were moved. Vallabhacharya was not only a devout *bhakta* like Caitanya but he was the profoundest philosopher of his age. With the aid of his deep philosophic insight he has after deep thought summarised the teachings of the four *prasthanas*, in his noble work the *Tattva-dipā-nibandha*. The system he thus formulated is known as *brahmavada* as opposed to the *mayavada* of Sankara. We shall take a brief review of the *brahmavada* as

taught by him in his Nibandha, Bhāsyas and Subodhīni and then fully expounded by his sons, grandsons and followers after his time.

The *brahmanavada* or the doctrine in which *brahma* is everything is the teaching of the Upanisads. One homogeneous entity devoid of any distinctions within itself becomes many, *jada*, *jiva*, *antaryami* etc., for its own sport through the divine will without undergoing the least change within itself. Thus this system receives another name of *avikṛtaparināma-vada*. Just as gold is gold even when it is turned into numerous ornaments *kafaka*, *kundala*, etc., the *brahman* remains *brahman* even when it assumes numerous names and forms. Just as various ornaments being of gold are one with gold, these multiform phenomena being *brahman* are one with it. The only difference is this. We call a gold ornament by its particular name, and not that it is gold merely, so this whole phenomenon is known by its particular name and form. But in any case it never ceases to be *brahman*. Hence also it is one with *brahman*. This one-ness, non-duality is due to the relation of the cause and the effect and not to *māya*. It is established by Vyasa in 2.1.14, that the cause and the effect, name and form, class and individual and the part and the whole are ever non-dual. Thus the effect *jagat* is non-different, non-dual from the cause *brahman*, the part *jiva* is non-dual from the whole

brahman. This non-duality without the interference of *māya* is the essence of *brahmanavada*. It is established by Śrīmadvallabhacharya without resorting to the Sankara method of calling the whole phenomenon to be *mayika* or illusive. Thus you must have seen the significance of the significant title of *suddhadvaita* by which this system of Śrīmadvallabhacharya is known to the world of scholars. Vallabha thoroughly maintains that the ultimate teaching of the Upanisads is *advaita* but this *advaita* (non-duality) is not due to *māya*. To secure *advaita* (non-duality) by calling the phenomenon to be a baseless illusive nothing he entirely disapproves of.

In the system of Vallabhacharya the authority of the word of Śruti towers over all proofs, viz., perception, inference, etc. The conception of the Supreme, as possessed of action and knowledge, has its origin in Vedas, and Vallabhacharya strongly insists that *brahman* should be exactly such as is described in the Vedas. Vallabhacharya unlike Sankara believes that *brahman* can be learnt from Vedas alone (A.B. 1.1.4).

This *brahman* is possessed of all attributes.¹ It is possessed of infinite powers.² Not only that *brahman* possesses all attributes but it is possessed of even those that appear to be contradictory. It is *sakara* and *nirakara*. It is *saguna* and *nirguna*. It is everything. Vallabhacharya

1. *Sarva-dharmopapattiesca* (B. S. 2.1.37).

2. *Sarvopeta ca tattvasanat* (B. S. 2.1.30).

does not make an impossible demand on your credulity when he says that *brahman* is possessed of contradictory attributes. The Sruti texts interpreted most naturally yield the same thing. It (*brahman*) is one and infinite. It is all-prevading still it resides in the heart. It is the biggest and the smallest. It sees without eyes, hears without ears, runs without feet and catches without hands. Not only Sruti but Bhagavad-gita tunes on the same string. It is *prabhava* and *pralaya*. The learned author Vyasa is of the same opinion. Brahman is *niravayava* still it is the cause (*upadana*) of the universe. These attributes, though contradictory are true (merely) because these are countenanced by the word of the Sruti text (*srutestu sabda-mulalvat*, B. S. 2.1.27). The most popular of all Puranas, Srimad-Bhagavata teaches the same thing when it says that *brahman* is *atmarama*. In the august presence of Narayana there are Lotus (a symbol of water) and a mace (a symbol of fire-tejas) there are also serpent (*naga*) and Garuda. This is not merely mythological. It simply illustrates the Vedic divine truth that the *brahman* is possessed of the contradictory attributes. You will now draw your attention to what we said before that the *avikṛta brahman* evolves this universe. This is also an instance of the *viruddha-dharmasrayatva* of *brahman*. In nature there are certain phenomena which defy the laws of nature. In such a

case we say-'The thing is such'. The moon attracts the waters of the ocean. There is no satisfactory reason why it should be so. Similarly *brahman* which is beyond thought should not be limited by our undeveloped meagre ideas of reasons but it should be accepted as such as it is *viruddha-dharmasrayi*.

This *brahman* is both a doer and enjoyer. The primary action can be possible in *brahman* and *brahman* alone. The *jiva* cannot be active. Nor can *jiva* be the primary mover, for he is dependent. Some Indian thinkers strongly object to the *kartrva* of *brahman*. But all their objections are disregarded by Vallabhacharya. *Brahman*, is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of this universe. This truth is repeatedly taught by Srutis, Gita and Vyasa. To deprive *brahman* of its *kartrva* by calling the latter to be illusive (*mayika*) is considered by Vallabhacharya to be a horribly violent twist given to the meaning of the sacred scriptures. To say that acting *brahman* is merely an esoteric way of instructing ignorant people while 'non-acting' *brahman* is the esoteric one taught only to the blessed few, is a round-about-way of cleverly harmonizing the texts of the Srutis to one's previously accepted views. No one in the world attributes to the *brahman* the *prakṛta* (earthly) *kartrva*. But the essential, real, primary, divine *kartrva* (action) can belong to none but *brahman* alone.

Just as *brahman* is *kartr* (doer) it is *bhoktr* also. This is taught by Vyasa in '*atta caracara-grahana'*' (B. S. 2.1.9). Vallabhacharya does not attribute to *brahman* the ordinary *prakṛta bhoktr*, but he says that essentially divine act of enjoying can belong to none but *brahman*.

The strongest argument advanced against *brahman*'s being a doer is that it would be liable to the faults of being cruel to some and partial to others. Sri Vallabhacharya answers this objection on the authority of the Sruti text '*sa atmanam svayam akuruta*.' This whole *prapanca* consisting of *jada* and *jivas* is *atma-srsti*. A father is not liable to the fault of partiality or cruelty if he punishes or shows favour to some of his own children, so God is not. Vyasa obviously removes the same difficulty by bringing in *karma*.

Thus *brahman* is possessed of all attributes, it is the primary doer and enjoyer, it is possessed of even contradictory attributes, and it is free from any faults.

We now proceed to consider the nature of human soul as conceived by Vallabhacharya, on the authority of the revealed scriptures. *Brahman* was one without a second, it does not play alone, it desires to be many. Instantaneously with this desire emanated infinite *jivas* from *brahman* as sparks emanate out of fire. The divine attributes which a human soul ought to have possessed, being a part and parcel of *brahman*, became non-

manifest (latent) through the further working process of the divine will for the eternal fun. Thus *jivatman* became subject to bondage¹ and wrong knowledge (*ajnana*). The *ananda* portion of *jivatmans* became latent as they emanated out of *brahman*. This made a human soul *kama-maya* (full of desire). Such is the *jivatman* when he begins his career in the divine fair.

The human soul is eternal, unchanging, undying. It is neither born nor dead. Birth and death apply to the human body and not the soul. The *jivatva* of *jivatman* is not due to nescience as some suppose. The human soul is as real as the *paramatman*. Vallabhacharya does not like the opinion of those who think that the *jivatva* of *jivatman* is due to nescience, for it ultimately signifies that the *jivatman* is unreal, a belief opposed to all the scriptures of the Anyans.

Three mutually conflicting theories have been proposed as regards the size of the human soul. The Jainas maintain that the human soul is of the size of the body. This theory is liable to many objections and hence it has been vehemently criticised by all the doctors of Vedanta.

The second theory is that the human soul is all-pervading. This view is endorsed by Sankara, but the

1. *Parabhidyantatu tirohitam tato hyasya bandha-viparyayau.* (B. S. 3.2.5).

majority of Vedanta commentators differ from Sankara. They all unanimously maintain that the human soul is atomic. Vyasa teaches the same thing in a rather lengthy section in the 3rd pada of the 2nd chapter of his Vedanta-mimamsa. But after declaring that the human soul is of the atomic size, Vyasa takes notice of those texts of scripture which teach that the human soul is all-prevading. The omnipresence, says Vyasa, is an attribute primarily belonging to *brahman*, but when *jiva* becomes *brahman* (equal to *brahman*), he also like *brahman* experiences omnipresence. Just as the son of a king becomes king after his coronation, so human soul experiences omnipresence etc., after its latent Bliss portion becomes manifest (B. S. 2.3.29 etc.). Thus Vallabhacharya believes the human soul to be of the atomic size. The human soul may become omnipresent (*vibhu*) when its latent *anandamsa* becomes manifest.

Brahman is a doer and enjoyer, so the human soul is both a doer and enjoyer. These acts of doing and enjoying primarily belong to *brahman*, but as the human soul is the part of the *brahman*, it like *brahman*, becomes a doer and enjoyer (*parattu tacchruteh*. B. S. 2.3.41). Just as the eye sees bad as well as good objects the *jiva* (human soul) likewise does sometimes what is good for himself or bad at another time, because his powers are limited, because he has no *samadhi* (which enables one

to see the right) and because there is no *mantra* which might make him do good always.

This *jivatman* is an *amsa* (part) of *brahman* (*amso nanavyapadesat*... B. S. 2.3.43). The human soul is a part and parcel of *brahman*. The relation between the human soul and the divine soul (*paramatman*) is that of a part to the whole (*amsamsibhava*). The human soul and *brahman* are non-different as the part is non-different from the whole (B. S. 2.1.14).

Thus according to Vallabhacharya the human soul is real, atomic. It is both a doer and enjoyer, a part of *brahman* and non-dual from the same. *Jiva* may become *vibhu* (all-prevading) when he experiences *brahmabhava*, the state of *brahman*.

JAGAT

Let us now consider what is *jagat*? This universe is the real effect of *brahman*. *Brahman* through its own will and for its own sport produces this universe from itself without undergoing the least change within itself on the analogy of the spider and his web. This universe is real because its origination, existence and dissolution all take place in *brahman* alone. In past, present and future this *jagat* has its abode (*sthit*) in *brahman*. Thus this universe derives its reality from *brahman*. This universe is real and hence it is non-dual from *brahman* (B. S.

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2.1.16). No non-duality is possible between a true *brahman* and a false illusive anything. There are many who are tempted to term this universe unreal on the analogy of a dream. But this is not the method of looking at things rightly. The world (universe) as we see it is altogether different from dream and there is no similarity between *jagat* and *svapna*. When there is no similarity between *jagat* and *svapna*, it inherits its nature from *brahman*, but it never ceases to be *brahman* (*brahma rupa*, a form of *brahman*). The essence of Vallabhacharya's teaching is that whatever evolves out of *brahman* is real. Through the divine will different names and forms are attributed to the creatures of *brahman*.

Nothing is really destroyed. Only some new things appear to our sight while others disappear from our sight. This disappearance of a thing does not deprive it of its existence; similarly by the two divine powers of manifestation and non-manifestation, existence and dissolution of the universe are guided. Hence *jagat* is eternal also.

Before finishing the consideration of *tattvas* let me draw your attention to one important feature of the teaching of Vallabhacharya. You will then realise what an acute thinker he was. No Acarya before him drew a line

1. *Vaidharmyacca na svapnadivat*. (B. S. 2.2.29).

of distinction between *jagat* and *samsara*. He most emphatically asserted the difference between *jagat* and *samsara*. *Jagat* is an effect of *brahman*, it is an entity, it is real and eternal, while *samsara* is a non-entity, it is a mere belief, it is unreal. *Brahman* is both, the material and efficient cause of this universe. While *samsara* has no material cause, its efficient cause is nescience (*avidya*). The existence of different things is no act of nescience, but the knowledge that these things are different, that they are not *brahman-rupa*, but they are mine or his is due to nescience and hence it is unreal. When a man becomes free from this 'mine and his', he becomes free from this *samsara*. After the acquirement of knowledge the *samsara* vanishes, but the universe appears to him to exist as *brahma-rupa*.

The learned Badarayana Vyasa teaches us that the real and the highest *purusartha* is *brahman*. To achieve this *brahman* some *sadhanas* are commonly known, viz., *karma*, *upasana*, *jnana* and *bhakti*. The path of *karma* is beneficial only if it is rightly followed. The path of *karma* is the most difficult. To perform *karmas* rightly there must be no desire of fruit (*phalasa*), but every one knows how difficult it is to free ourselves from this desire. Further the *karman* must be dedicated to *brahman*. This also is difficult, we are so much engrossed in our ego that it is difficult, nay impossible, to

forget ourselves and to remember God. Hence the path of *karma* stands in the last grade in the system of Vallabhacarya. All the same, however, Vallabhacarya does not believe the performance of *karma* to be useless in spite of the just-now-said difficulties. If one can perform them rightly they bring to one purification of mind and soul. This purification in its turn serves as a stepping stone to the higher spheres of *jnana* and *bhakti*.

Some writers have confused *bhakti* and *upasana*. Vallabhacarya draws a line of distinction between the two. *Upasana* is the worship of powers (*vibhutis*) of God, while *bhakti* is the boundless love of the supreme after the knowledge of the greatness of the supreme is acquired.

Upasana of a deity gives the knowledge of the greatness of God, which knowledge in its turn engenders love for the supreme.

Thus in the system of Vallabhacarya *karma*, *upasana* and *jnana* are all aiding agents of *bhakti*. This *bhakti* is the intense love of the supreme which manifests in one, after one experiences the greatness of the supreme. So the highest *purusartha* is to be achieved only through *bhakti*. Right performance of *karma* results in *citta-prasannata*. *Upasana* gives knowledge of the greatness of the supreme. The *jnana* ends miseries and gives the knowledge of *brahman*. All

the three combined produce love for the supreme, by which alone the highest of all *purusarthas* is to be attained.

PHALA

Now we consider the *phala* in *brahmavada*. The invariable fruit which results from *karma* is a series of births and deaths. It brings earthly enjoyments most generally, which after all are a bondage. If *karma* is performed in the right direction then, and then only, it becomes the *anga* of *bhakti*, and indirectly helps in reaching *brahman*.

The position of *jnana* is superior to *karma*. Not only it ends earthly miseries and sorrows, but it secures one a *laya* in the *aksara-brahman*. This *aksara* is the abode of *purusottama* in *brahma-vada*. It is this *aksara* which is described negatively in *Srutis*. The *aksara* is allpervading, it is all-light. The perfect non-duality of *jivas* with this *aksara brahman* (*sayujya*) is the fruit achieved by *jnana*.

But when the *jnanin* is a *bhakta* the Supreme Lord raises this *jnanI jiva* from *aksara* and then takes him to a higher sphere. The highest fruit of *jnanI bhakta* is an abode in *Vaikunthadiloka*.

All that we have said up to this time refers to the *brahmavada* of the old Vedic sages. In this *brahmavada* only the members of the first three casts have their

scope. The emancipation is only to be secured by a Brahmin. Before the time of Vallabhacarya no one ever so strongly felt the limited nature of this religion. A philosopher of the calibre of Vallabhacarya could not but realise the narrow exclusiveness and unsuitability to times of the old Vedic religion, and he boldly paved the new way for the salvation of all including Brahmana, Ksatriya, Vaisya, Sudras and females. In the old religion there is no scope for females and Sudras. Lord Krsna, the Almighty, saw through and through this narrow exclusiveness and he paved a way for the emancipation of females and Sudras. People of whatever sex and caste can devote themselves to Him and achieve the highest of all *purusarthas*. This system which was thus called out by Vallabhacarya from the words of Krsna is known as doctrine of grace or Pusti-marga. All people have to strive for the grace of God and this grace of God is to save all. The mind of Vallabhacarya was so liberal that he thought that even the Hindus of the lowest caste can unite with those of the highest in the devotion of Lord Krsna. The female, who was up to this time barred from all rights and known as unfit for Vedic religion, was turned to be the head priest in the system of the doctrine of grace. The Gopikas of Gokula led the banner of this noblest ideal of the religion of love. God was to save all through his own grace and not through the individual's

efforts. This is the mission of Srikrna pronounced at the end of Bhagavadgita. Complete resignation to God and his will (*atma-nivedana* and *bhagavatprapatti*) is the important feature of this religion. To whatever caste, creed, race or sex one may belong, if one has *atma-nivedana* and *bhagavat-prapatti* one is sure to be saved only through the mercy of God. These two were taught by Srikrna. This was the mission brought to light by Sri Vallabhacarya. Self-dedication to God, individual helplessness, complete shelter in God's will and mercy and intense love to the Supreme are the salient points of this Pustimarga. It is through these teachings that Srikrna is called *sarvoddhara-prayatnatma* (the saviour of all), it was through these that Vallabha's system is the most liberal, it was through these that Vallabhacarya is said to have given the highest ideals of a common universal religion.

